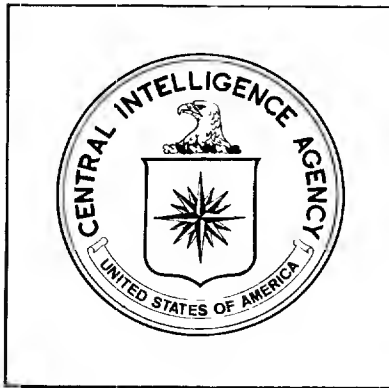


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No. 0156-75

March 19, 1975

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WESTERN EUROPE – CANADA – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

France Reported Considering Some New
NATO Links

1

25X6

Portugal Bans Political Activity By
Center-right, Far-left Groups.

6

Belgian Demonstrations Fizzle.

8

25X6

Furor Over Possible Shelepin Visit
to Britain

11

March 19, 1975

SECRET

SECRET

25X1A



France Reported Considering Some New NATO Links

France is looking for ways to increase cooperation with NATO, although only very limited steps appear to have been taken thus far.



President Giscard has approved "limited, but important collaboration" with the alliance's integrated military command, which France left in 1966. Specifically, Giscard is said to have authorized high-level secret talks to try to determine the wartime role of French forces in Germany within the framework of the NATO integrated command.

Giscard has stipulated that French forces are not to be deployed eastward, where they would be tied into the NATO strategy of forward area defense. Rather, these forces are to be held in the rear where they could be used as NATO's primary ground reinforcement in the initial days of a conflict with the Warsaw Pact. This strategy also serves national interests by keeping the French First Army in position to defend its own territory in the event Warsaw Pact forces break through NATO's forward-based forces in West Germany.

The French President basically appears to be trying to formalize discussions and arrangements that previously have been handled informally. [REDACTED] the extent of France's cooperation will depend primarily on whether any arrangement that is reached can be kept secret. [REDACTED] Giscard has been quietly telling his West

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25X1C

March 19, 1975

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European allies that he hopes to shift French policy closer to NATO, but that he will be restrained from making any obvious moves by his continued dependence on the Gaullists in the National Assembly.

The French President is known to have a more open attitude toward cooperation with NATO than his predecessors, but he clearly is not prepared to move toward actual reentry of French forces into the Alliance's integrated command. His government has been showing interest in several NATO activities, however. Foreign Minister Sauvagnargues told NATO Secretary-General Luns in February that Paris is studying ways of tying its communications system into the NATO network. The French have also participated recently in the Alliance's communications committee, although they would not be able to vote until they actually enter the NATO network.

The French NATO representative has said that he wants to participate in SHAPEX 75, an alliance exercise that will involve a symposium on basic problems of the organization. While the French have not previously participated in this exercise, they have taken part in other, more significant exercises. The government has also allowed US forces in Europe to use training areas in southern France despite domestic criticism.

The possibility of French participation in NATO's Eurogroup has also been raised again, this time in a brief statement by a French Socialist Party official that appeared early this month in Le Monde. Rumors that France was about to join the Eurogroup have been circulating for at least a year and have consistently been denied by the French government. Under Pompidou, the French allegedly were motivated by the desire to lay the groundwork for an exclusively European defense force; under Giscard, it reportedly has been the

March 19, 1975

SECRET

SECRET

price for securing a part of the future West European arms market. The Belgian Prime Minister told Giscard that his country would replace its F-104 aircraft with Mirages only if France developed closer military ties with its allies through such a forum as the Eurogroup. (Secret No Foreign Dissem/No Dissem Abroad/Controlled Dissem)

March 19, 1975

-3-

SECRET

25X6

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Portugal Bans Political Activity By Center-right,
Far-left Groups

Portugal's newly created Revolutionary Council yesterday issued a ban on political activity by the center-right Christian Democrats and two far-left groups. The ban will be in effect until after the election on April 12; the parties reportedly will be permitted to keep their offices open. Christian Democrat leader Major Sanches Osorio, who was a close associate of General Spínola, was accused of complicity in the unsuccessful coup attempt on March 11.

The Social Democratic Center was not included in the ban and will apparently be permitted to participate in the election. The Social Democrats appeal primarily to conservatives and have been described as "fascist" by leftists. The loss of party records in extremist attacks following the abortive coup will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the party to organize an effective election campaign.

The inclusion of leftist groups in the ban was expected, in view of the military's pledge to curb political violence. At least one of the two groups has frequently criticized the Armed Forces Movement, as well as the Communist Party, and is expected to continue or perhaps increase political violence. Several thousand supporters of this group, the Reorganizing Movement of the Proletarian Party, gathered outside the National Assembly building in Lisbon last night to protest the ban. The demonstrators dispersed without violence following a show of force by the military.

March 19, 1975

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In the meantime, a cabinet shuffle authorized last week has still not materialized. The delay suggests that Prime Minister Goncalves is having trouble finding suitable candidates or obtaining agreement on his recommendations. Goncalves said last week that he would bring members of the Portuguese Democratic Movement, a communist front, into the government. Rumors of a marked shift to the left continue.

In Oporto last Sunday, Foreign Minister Soares, the Socialist Party leader, came out against a cabinet change three weeks before the election. Appearing to challenge Goncalves, Soares said the communist-front group lacked the following to be included in the government. Soares added that he could best serve his country in his current position and that the Socialist campaign would open on schedule tomorrow.

Communist leader Cunhal's recent attacks on the center-left Popular Democratic Party indicate that there may be disagreement over the composition of the new cabinet. Cunhal claims that the Popular Democrats have abandoned their position as a member of the coalition government and have engaged in reactionary propagandizing. The Popular Democratic Party, in an exposed position since the coup attempt, has sought to defend itself by climbing on the Armed Forces Movement's bandwagon.

Vitor Alves, a minister without portfolio, told a US embassy source yesterday that an announcement is imminent that the election will be postponed. This lends substance to rumors that the balloting may be put off until April 25, the first anniversary of the overthrow of the Caetano regime. (Confidential)

March 19, 1975

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Belgian Demonstrations Fizzle

The opposition Socialist rally and the Flemish nationalist demonstration last weekend did not seriously threaten the Belgian government.

Some 25,000 Socialists gathered in Brussels on Saturday to condemn the government's failure to take strong action to correct increasing unemployment and the high cost of living. The weather was poor and the crowd smaller than expected. The governing Social Democrats concluded from speeches during the rally that the Dutch-speaking wing of the Socialist Party was interested in eventually joining the government, but negotiations for such a merger are not expected until after the summer holidays.

Flemish nationalists rallied some 3,500 Dutch-speaking loyalists on Sunday and tried to march into the bilingual borough of Schaerbeek. This demonstration had been banned by authorities; police security forces broke up the demonstrators and detained some 50 to 100 would-be rioters. Failure to attract a bigger turn-out probably reflects the success of Prime Minister Tindemans' efforts to keep the linguistic question out of parliament. For the time being, the danger of a political crisis over this touchy issue has been avoided. (Confidential)

March 19, 1975

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Furor Over Possible Shelepin Visit to Britain

The Wilson government's decision to grant a visa to Alexander Shelepin, former head of the Soviet secret police (KGB) and now head of the Soviet trade union council, has aroused a storm of protest in Britain. Shelepin is scheduled to lead a delegation of Soviet trade union officials that has been invited to visit Britain next month.

Parliamentary opposition has resulted in a letter of protest signed by 104 members from all parties. Some moderates, however, maintain that the Soviet leader, while not welcome, should not be kept out.

Shelepin's prospective visit raises a number of problems for the British government. These include:

--The treatment he should be accorded. One Foreign Office official has said that Shelepin would be received as a trade union leader and not as a leading government figure and member of the politburo. Prime Minister Wilson, however, who has been trying to improve relations with the Soviets, must decide whether to meet Shelepin.

--The problem of ensuring his security. A number of anti-Soviet emigre and Jewish groups are almost certain to organize protest demonstrations. The Soviet delegation will include at least six security agents and the question has arisen as to whether the agents should be allowed to carry guns. Although they could be granted temporary firearms certificates, many Britons would be opposed to allowing known KGB officials to carry weapons.

March 19, 1975

-11-

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Although the Trades Union Congress issued the invitation to the Soviets, many union officials are having second thoughts about the visit. Only three top-level union leaders have said they favor Shelepin's coming, and one of these, Hugh Scanlon, head of Britain's second largest union, appears to be having some doubts. Several others have either expressed little enthusiasm or total opposition to the visit.

Union leaders, moreover, are unable to decide what sort of program to set up for the Soviet delegation. They had hoped to visit several British factories, but many employers, already plagued with union problems, are not interested in extending such hospitality.

Moscow originally regarded the Shelepin visit as part of its effort to improve relations with the UK, exemplified by Wilson's trip to the USSR last month. In addition, it would enhance the respectability of the USSR's controlled "trade unions" in their contacts with Western labor organizations. The uproar over Shelepin may now cause the Soviets to reconsider the desirability of having him go. On the other hand, they will be reluctant to appear to be knuckling under to British public opinion, because it might appear to be a tacit admission that there is something odious about Shelepin. (Confidential No Foreign Dissem)

March 19, 1975

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